

Chapter 9 - Opening your first program:

Skills needed:

Mouse and keyboard (Chapter 5)

At long last we are going to do something productive with this frustrating machine.

Move the mouse arrow to the Start button and left click on the mouse. Move the arrow gently up the Start menu until the word Programs is highlighted in blue and left click again. This brings up the Programs sub-menu at the top of which you should find Accessories. Move the arrow across to the sub menu and place it over the word Accessories that becomes highlighted. Left click to raise a further sub-menu. You are looking for a program called WordPad usually found at the bottom of this third menu list. Highlight WordPad and left click yet again. This activates the program that displays on the screen.

If you achieve this first time you are doing remarkably well. The usual problem encountered by beginners is mouse control. Like learning to ride a bike, it seems to wobble about with a life of its own. Don't worry this settles down quite quickly with practice but your first few attempts may result in the arrow pointer straying outside the boundaries of the menu list and offering you a menu you don't want. Be patient. Move the pointer gently but firmly up, down and across until you navigate your way to WordPad. If you make the mistake of clicking the mouse outside the menu list the Start menu will disappear. Just click on the Start button again to begin again.

WordPad:

This is a very basic word-processing (typing) program found on all Windows systems. In spite of its basic properties it is still very useful and can be used to compose letters, coloured advertisements and various other typed documents.

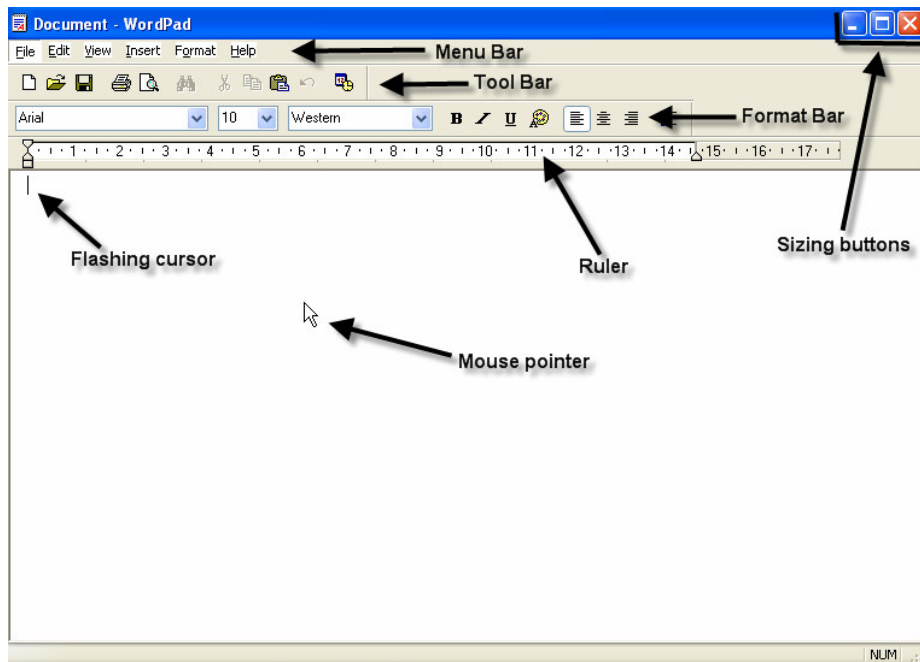


Fig. 6.1

Look at Fig. 6.1 and identify the various areas of the screen. You should have recognised the sizing buttons at the top right from previous exercises.

First let us identify the various parts of the window. The blue bar at the top is called the Title Bar and shows the name of the open window file. At the end of this bar are three buttons that allow you to enlarge, minimise or close the window. More of this later.

Below this is the Menu Bar with the words “File - Edit - View” etc. running across the screen. As the description implies this is a menu of various alternative actions available at any one time.

The next line is the Tool Bar that consists of various small icons lying under the Menu Bar. These icons form an alternative set of tools to activate commands – alternative to the Menu Bar. Some of these icons appear ‘greyed out’ or fuzzy which means that at this particular time they are unavailable for use. For example the binocular icon is ‘greyed out’ because this icon allows you to search through the text entered in the document and, since there is no text at present, it is of no value.

The Format Bar lies below the Tool Bar and allows us to set the type (or font), the size and the positioning of the text. Notice the two small arrowheads at the right-hand side of the boxes on the right of the Format Bar. Clicking on these arrowheads drops a menu down to allow further choice. Try clicking on the arrowhead on the right side of the first box that shows Times New Roman. Immediately a list drops down offering other typefaces or fonts so click on the word Arial and the program accepts that this is the font you want to use.

Before we go any further look at the three boxes at the top right of the Title Bar.



The left hand box minimises the window, the centre box maximises the window and the right hand box closes the window. Left click on the middle button to maximise the window. This fills the screen and makes life a lot easier but notice that these buttons now look like this -

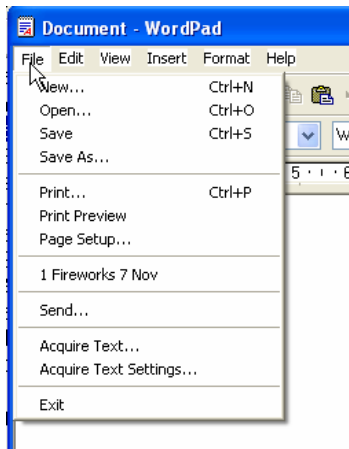


The middle button now shows superimposed squares and, if clicked, will restore the window to the original size. Try it. Now click on the left hand button to minimise the window. Do you see where it has gone? No? Look along the very bottom of the screen at the Status Bar and you will see a box labelled “Document”. Double left click on the box and the window will be restored.

If you have trouble with double clicking at the moment left click one then click on Open or Restore.

The Menu Bar:

This is common to many Windows programs showing the options of File – Edit – View – Insert etc.. You should notice that certain letters of these options such as the ‘F’ in File, the ‘V’ in View and the ‘o’ in Format are underlined – if not press the Alt key to the left of the space bar on the keyboard. These letters denote the alternative keyboard action to drop the various menus down by combining the letter with the Alt key. Thus Alt>F will drop down the File menu. (Hold down the Alt key while pressing the F key.) (Fig. 6.2)



This dropdown menu offers a wide range of options available for use such as Open to retrieve and work on a previous file; Save As to Save a file under a new name and Print Preview which, as its name suggests, shows you what the printed version would look like on paper.

Now try and drop down the Edit menu by moving the mouse pointer over the word Edit and left clicking if necessary or by typing Alt>E. This time you will see that a number of the options are “greyed out” denoting that they are unavailable at this time. For example since we have not started to type anything there is nothing to “Copy” or “Cut” from the document

Fig. 6.2

The Tool Bar:

Lying immediately below the Menu Bar there are a number of icons representing shortcuts to many frequently used commands. This bar may not be visible on your screen in which case click on View on the menu bar and make sure there is a tick beside the word Toolbar – if not left click on it to make it visible. Can you remember how to identify these icons? We dealt with this in Chapter 6 but if, as I expect, the answer is “No” then to save you searching back in the book I will remind you that placing the tip of the mouse pointer over these icons will identify them. Benevolence personified! We will return to the tool bar later.

The Format Bar:

This is really an extension of the tool bar giving even more commands to the word processor. Try identifying the various icons again but do not try to remember them at this stage.

The Main Screen:

The Cursor:

The largest part of the window consists of a blank box with a flashing cursor () near the top left corner. See it? It is a small upright line flashing on and off. This indicates the point where any text typed will be inserted.

The I Pointer:

Previously the position of the mouse pointer has been in the shape of an arrow but in the word-processing program it has changed to the shape of a capital “I”. Hence the name, “I” pointer, spoken as “eye” pointer. It moves with the mouse in the identical manner to the arrow pointer and it is used to place the cursor in a different position for typing as we shall see in a moment. You cannot place the cursor below the last point of type entry. To do this you have to add blank lines by hitting the Enter key before placing the cursor within these lines. Hitting the Enter key counts as a type entry.

Beginners often muddle the functions of the cursor and the pointer. **The cursor moves with typing and the pointer moves with the mouse.**

At the top left hand corner of the main part of the screen you will see the cursor flashing like a small upright line. This is where your typing will be inserted. Try it by typing in your address. To create a new line use the Enter key and the cursor will move down a line waiting for your next entry. To enter capital letters hold down the Shift key while typing the letter key.

If you continue to type across the screen the computer will automatically drop down the typing point to the next line when you reach the right-hand edge taking any words that will not fit onto the next line.

To create a paragraph hit the Enter key twice. This will enter a blank line under your previous text.

After a few lines everything will look, well, adequate. You have probably made a few typing errors and everything is positioned to the left of the screen. Let us correct those errors first.

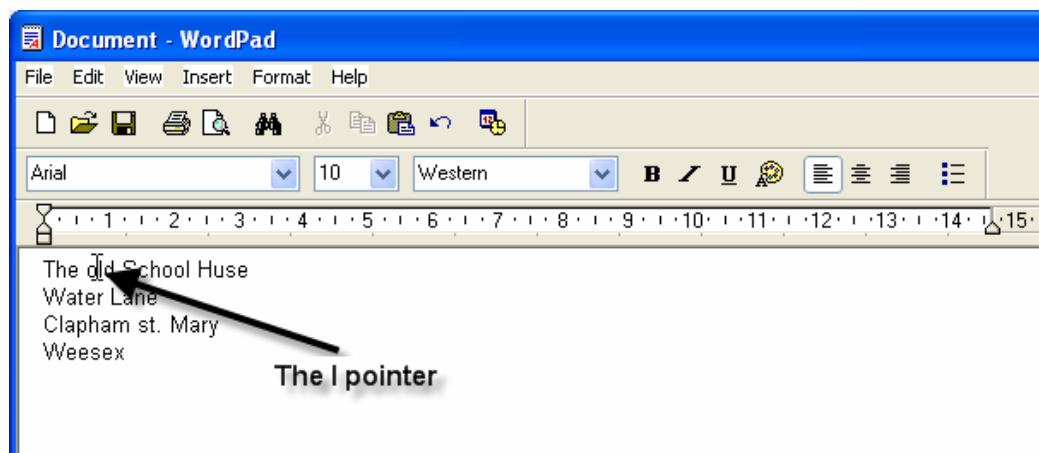


Fig. 6.4

Backspace and Delete Keys:

Use the mouse to place the pointer which is no longer an arrow but a capital "I" called, descriptively, the "I cursor". If you can't find it move the mouse around a bit and its movement will give it away. Place this "I" just **after** the typing error, left click with the mouse and hit the Backspace key – the one with a straight arrow pointing to the left (top right of the QWERTY keyboard) – just once. In the example above (Fig. 6.4) the lower case "o" of "old" needs to be capitalised so I have placed the "I" pointer just after the "o" and left clicked once to lock the cursor there before hitting Backspace.

Tip:

If you have difficulty placing the cursor accurately – and this is common in beginners – place the cursor close to the insertion point and then use the arrow keys on the Navigation Pad to get it into the correct position. These keys move the cursor one space or line at a time.

Notice that I said ‘hit’ the Backspace key rather than ‘Press’. The reason for this is that if you hold the key down for too long it will repeat its action very quickly and you find that you have erased not only the error but a lot of the good type as well. This happens with most keys. To demonstrate, place the “I” cursor at the very end of your typing, left click to lock it there and then hold down one of the letter keys.

ee!

See what I mean?

Continue to correct any further typing errors or simply remove various words as practice. The **Backspace** key removes typing to the **left** of the cursor. If you wish to remove typing to the **right** of the cursor use the **Delete** key on the Navigation pad.

Close the WordPad window by clicking on the **X** sizing button at the top right of the window. You will be asked if you want to save Document 1 before closing – click on No because we will deal with saving files in the next chapter.

That is enough for now and you will find that there are many things that you are not allowed to do at this stage such as placing the “I” cursor anywhere on the page except within or at the immediate end of the typed characters. Don’t worry, further explanation of word-processing will be found in Chapter 8 - this exercise was aimed simply at the use of the keyboard. How have you done?